

1 KATHRYN E. LANDRETH
United States Attorney
2 100 West Liberty Street, Suite 600
Reno, Nevada 89501
3 Telephone: (702) 784-5439

4 SUSAN L. SCHNEIDER
United States Department of Justice
5 Environment & Natural Resources Division
Indian Resources Section
6 999 18th Street, Suite 945
Denver, Colorado 80202
7 Telephone: (303) 312-7308

8 Attorneys for the UNITED STATES OF
AMERICA

SCOTT B. MCELROY
ALICE E. WALKER
Greene, Meyer & McElroy, P.C.
1007 Pearl Street, Suite 220
Boulder, Colorado 80302
Telephone: (303) 442-2021

KELLY R. CHASE
P.O. Box 2800
Minden, Nevada 89423
Telephone: (702) 782-5110

Attorneys for the WALKER RIVER PAIUTE
TRIBE

9
10 IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEVADA

11 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

12 Plaintiff,

13 WALKER RIVER PAIUTE TRIBE,

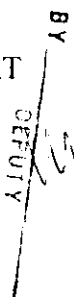
14 Plaintiff-Intervenor,

15 vs.

16 WALKER RIVER IRRIGATION

17 DISTRICT, a corporation, et al.,

18 Defendants.
19

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20 RESPONSE OF THE UNITED STATES
AND WALKER RIVER PAIUTE TRIBE
21 TO JOINT MOTION BY THE STATE OF
NEVADA AND WRID CONCERNING
22 CASE MANAGEMENT

23 The United States and the Walker River Paiute Tribe ("Tribe") have reviewed the Joint Motion
24 Concerning Case Management filed by the Walker River Irrigation District ("WRID") and the State of
25 Nevada, which includes a Proposed Order Concerning Case Management ("WRID/Nevada Proposed
26 Order"). As discussed below, we agree generally with some of the suggestions contained therein. We do
27 not believe, however, that the WRID/Nevada Proposed Order will result in a case management structure
28 that will "secure the just, speedy, and inexpensive determination of [this] action."^{1/} Rather, it appears that
the WRID/Nevada Proposed Order is drawn to complicate further the already complicated procedural
hurdles the United States and Tribe must clear so that their claims may be heard.

^{1/} Fed. Rule of Civil Procedure 1.

1 First, the WRID/Nevada Proposed Order does not establish procedures that will lead to the
 2 efficient resolution of a definable set of threshold legal issues in this litigation. On the one hand, the
 3 WRID/Nevada Proposed Order recommends a limited set of threshold issues to be determined at the
 4 outset of the case, which includes issues of jurisdiction and groundwater, but does not include any kind of
 5 defenses that other parties may assert. On the other hand, the WRID/Nevada Proposed Order would also
 6 authorize virtually unlimited discovery against the United States and the Tribe without regard to the range
 7 of issues to be decided in the initial phase of the case. Neither of these elements of the WRID/Nevada
 8 Proposed Order will assist the Court and the parties in establishing a process for the identification and
 9 orderly resolution of the issues raised by the United States' and Tribe's claims. At this point, the Court and
 10 parties should determine which issues the Court will address initially and then determine the related
 11 procedural aspects of the litigation, such as the scope and timing of discovery. Dividing this litigation into
 12 phases at the outset, based on parties and issues, as the United States and Tribe have suggested, is a logical
 13 and efficient way to proceed. See e.g., Manual for Complex Litigation, Third, Federal Judicial Center,
 14 1995, 21.211, 21.32.

15 Regarding the threshold issues, the United States and the Tribe have proposed that the initial phase
 16 of this litigation focus on certain legal issues related to this Court's jurisdiction, groundwater, and affirmative
 17 defenses the other parties may assert. We believe that this is logical, efficient, economic, and just. Focusing
 18 on threshold issues such as jurisdiction and related affirmative defenses is a logical first step, because it
 19 allows for the prompt resolution of these potentially or partially dispositive issues.^{2/} If WRID or the State
 20 or any other party has a procedural or other defense to going forward, then this is the logical time to identify
 21 the defense and address it. It is efficient to resolve threshold issues regarding the Tribal Claims because
 22 it allows the parties to focus their time and resources on a manageable set of issues, and eliminates the
 23 temptation for the parties to litigate every issue in the case at once, without a coherent structure for doing
 24 so. Resolution of the threshold issues regarding the Tribal Claims may also lead to more efficient resolution
 25 of similar issues regarding the other federal claims. Finally, it is just because the Tribe and the United States

26
 27 ^{2/} The United States and the Tribe also assert that whatever statement of specific threshold issues the
 28 Court ultimately adopts, it should be by way of a more neutral phrasing of these issues than offered in the
 WRID/Nevada Proposed Order. See e.g. WRID/Nevada Proposed Order at Para. 11.A.

1 should have the opportunity to obtain legal redress for their claims in the most logical and efficient manner
 2 possible. This case originated in 1924 with certain claims made on behalf of the Tribe and the current effort
 3 to proceed with the counterclaims began in 1992 on behalf of and regarding the Tribal Claims. The Tribe
 4 should not have to remain on the sideline while other claims and issues are litigated before theirs and while
 5 the status quo as to water use, for which it and the United States wish to obtain legal redress, continues and
 6 likely worsens.

7 Regarding discovery, the United States and the Tribe have proposed that procedures as to the
 8 scope and timing of discovery should only be addressed once it is clear which issues are the present focus
 9 of the litigation. Thereafter, and in light of the determination of issues to be decided in the initial phase, the
 10 parties should be required to confer on a proposed Discovery Plan for submission to the Court. If
 11 necessary, this plan can be finalized with the assistance of the Court and the Magistrate Judge. The
 12 approach suggested by the United States and the Tribe is consistent with the guidance of the Manual for

13 Complex Litigation:

14 Discovery in complex litigation, characterized by multiple parties, difficult issues, voluminous
 15 evidence, and large numbers of witnesses, tends to proliferate and become excessively costly, time
 16 consuming, and burdensome. Early and ongoing judicial control is therefore imperative for effective
 management....

17 Fundamental to control is that discovery be directed at the material issues in controversy. The
 18 general principle governing the scope of discovery stated in Rule 26(b)(1) permits discovery of
 19 matters "relevant to the subject matter ... [of] the action" if "[t]he information sought . . . appears
 20 reasonably calculated to lead to the discovery of admissible evidence." But Rule 26(b)(2) directs
 21 the court to limit the frequency and extent of use of the discovery methods permitted by the rules,
 to prevent "unreasonably cumulative or duplicative" discovery and discovery for which "the burden
 or expense ... outweighs its likely benefit, taking into account the needs of the case. ... the
 importance of the issues at stake ... and the importance of the proposed discovery in resolving the
 issues." Application of this underlying principle of proportionality means that even in complex
 litigation, conducting discovery does not call for leaving no stone unturned.

22 Early identification and clarification of issues is therefore essential to meaningful and fair discovery
 23 control. It enables the court to assess the materiality and relevance of proposed discovery and
 provides the basis for formulating a fair and effective discovery plan....

24 Manual for Complex Litigation, Third at 21.4, 21.41 (citations omitted).

25 By contrast, the WRID/Nevada Proposed Order does not establish meaningful controls on
 26 discovery. Although it purports to stay discovery subject to "limited" exceptions, it would authorize open-
 27 ended discovery against the United States and the Tribe. This would have several undesirable
 28 consequences. It would interfere needlessly with the service efforts of the United States and the Tribe, as

1 it would subject them to virtually unlimited discovery (interrogatories and requests for document
2 production) on any claim from any party to the case, even as they work to identify and serve the additional
3 parties. It would threaten to proliferate the issues in dispute at just the moment that they have been limited
4 to manageable proportions, without regard to the range of issues to be decided in the initial phase. It could
5 result in significant waste of resources, as discovery may be conducted needlessly on matters that never
6 arise because of the resolution of initial-phase issues. For all of the above reasons, it would delay the
7 ultimate resolution of this case. And for the same reasons, such one-sided discovery is unfair,
8 overburdensome, and costly for the United States and the Tribe. Moreover, this proposal bypasses any
9 less onerous, more reasonable and mutually applicable alternatives, such as the initial disclosure
10 requirements of the Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 26(a)(1) or the local rules of this Court.

11 Second, the WRID/Nevada Proposed Order is more time-consuming. In addition to the above
12 concerns regarding the WRID/Nevada Proposed Order's approach to discovery, we are concerned that
13 service efforts, which will be long and difficult under the best of circumstances, will be further delayed. For
14 the past five years, the parties and the Court have observed the difficulties Mineral County has encountered
15 in attempting to intervene in this action in the C-125 subfile. We believe the Mineral County experience
16 demonstrates that it will be critical to have the assistance of the Court as the United States and the Tribe
17 seek to identify and serve the additional parties for resolution of the Tribal and other federal claims. Thus,
18 the United States and the Tribe would like to identify and clarify from the start, as they have proposed, the
19 categories of parties to be included in this action. Related to this effort, they seek the assistance of the
20 Court in obtaining from the parties all information in their custody and control that identifies these persons.
21 It will be unnecessarily time-consuming for the United States and the Tribe to be left to identify these parties
22 on their own, only to meet at some future date the kinds of objections filed regarding the Mineral County
23 service effort. We do not want to see service and related procedural requirements disputed in a manner
24 that prevents access to the Court for redress of the Tribal Claims.

25 Third, the WRID/Nevada Proposed Order will be more costly for most of the parties. As noted
26 above, discovery and service-related efforts under the WRID/Nevada Proposed Order will be
27 unnecessarily expensive. In addition, this proposal would require the joinder of even more persons from
28 the outset of the case than as proposed by the United States and the Tribe, which will burden not just the

1 United States and the Tribe with additional litigation costs, but also burden these additionally joined persons
2 with unnecessary costs associated with being a party. This applies, for example, to groundwater users in
3 California. Perhaps WRID and the State of Nevada want these persons included in the case, but with a
4 bifurcation of parties and issues as suggested by the United States and the Tribe, their presence would not
5 be necessary at this phase of the litigation, and may well not be necessary at any point in the
6 litigation.

7 Notwithstanding the above concerns, there are some proposals in the WRID/Nevada Proposed
8 Order with which the United States and Tribes agree generally, although the specifics of these proposals
9 and their context do not allow complete and unqualified agreement. First, the United States and Tribe
10 agree that their service efforts should be combined with an effort to record a Notice of Lis Pendens with
11 the appropriate recorder(s) of the applicable property. We wish to explore further how each applicable
12 county or recorder wishes this process to be done and to discuss further with both the parties and the Court
13 the timing of such an effort, applicable procedures, and agreed-upon form for such notice. We believe that
14 this is an issue for which the specifics should be able to be worked out by the parties with the assistance
15 of the Court and Magistrate Judge.

16 Second, in the memorandum in support of the WRID/Nevada Proposed Order, WRID and the
17 State appear to imply that the Counter-claims may not be served until all parties are identified in the caption
18 of the Complaint under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 10(a). (Mem. at p. 6.) The United States and
19 Tribe recognize that their Complaint will have to comply with Rule 10(a), but it may not be reasonable,
20 practical, or even possible, to hold up service until all parties were identified with absolute certainty.
21 Indeed, it is clear from the efforts of Mineral County to effect service that the ownership of water interests
22 named in its Complaint have changed over time. This issue and the application of Federal Rule of Civil
23 Procedures 10 and 15, in conjunction with the completion of service, should be worked out by the parties
24 with the assistance of the Court and Magistrate Judge.

25 Third, the United States and the Tribe agree generally with the proposed additional procedures in
26 paragraph 12 of the WRID/Nevada Proposed Order regarding the potential need to perpetuate testimony,
27 but only to the extent that these procedures supplement and do not change or conflict with the Federal
28 Rules of Civil Procedure. To the extent that these proposed procedures change or conflict with existing

1 rules, then the parties should discuss the rationale for such proposals and determine if they can come to an
2 agreement on procedures if such an issue arises. This is an issue that at this point is speculative and can
3 be addressed with the assistance of the Court or Magistrate Judge in the context of further discussions on
4 the scope and implementation of discovery and as such issues arise initially.

5 Third, the United States and Tribe agree generally with the proposals that no defaults should be
6 taken against any party and that the parties should not be required to file counterclaims or cross-claims
7 against each other. We do not agree, however, that the parties served should be excused from filing
8 answers in this matter. All parties to the counterclaims of the United States and the Tribe should be
9 required to file answers, although we would agree to delay the filing of these answers until shortly after
10 completion of service, but before initiation of any discovery and litigation of what we have proposed as
11 threshold issues in the initial phase of this litigation. If the parties do not file answers, then the Court and
12 other parties will not know what the parties identify as issues, affirmative defenses, and other positions.
13 It would leave the litigation of initial issues extremely one-sided, unfair, and ad hoc, as well as frustrate the
14 goal of establishing and implementing a process for the identification and orderly resolution of the issues
15 raised by the United States' and Tribe's claims.

16 The United States and the Tribe note that a hearing is scheduled on March 14, 2000, before the
17 Magistrate Judge for the parties to address service issues in the C-125-C subfile concerning the Mineral
18 County intervention effort. We suggest that, time permitting, this may be an opportunity for the parties to
19 hold preliminary discussions with the Magistrate Judge concerning the procedural matters outlined in both
20 proposed Case Management Orders to see if the parties can resolve any of these issues with assistance,
21 to ascertain how service issues may be coordinated with or should proceed in the wake of the Mineral
22 County effort, and to discuss how the parties may avoid the problems and delays that have plainly impacted
23 the Mineral County case. The simple fact that the parties have been unable to agree upon a Case
24 Management Order in over eight months underscores the need for such judicial assistance at this stage of
25 the litigation and continuing thereafter.

1 WHEREFORE, for these and such other reasons as may appear to the Court, the United States
2 and the Tribe respectfully request that the Court adopt the Proposed Case Management Order previously
3 submitted by the United States and the Tribe.

4 Dated: 2/21/00


5 Respectfully submitted,

6 Scott B. McElroy
7 Alice E. Walker
8 GREENE, MEYER & MCELROY, P.C.
9 1007 Pearl Street, Suite 220
10 Boulder, Colorado 80302
11 (303) 442-2021

12 Kelly R. Chase
13 P.O. Box 2800
14 Minden, Nevada 89423
15 (702) 782-5110

16 *Attorneys for the Walker River Paiute Tribe*

17 Kathryn E. Landreth
18 United States Attorney
19 100 West Liberty St., Ste. 600
20 Reno, Nevada 89501
21 (702) 784-5439

22 By: 
23 Susan Schneider

24 *Attorneys for the United States of America*

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on this 21st day of February, 2000, I placed a true and correct copy of the foregoing "RESPONSE OF THE UNITED STATES AND WALKER RIVER PAIUTE TRIBE TO JOINT MOTION BY THE STATE OF NEVADA AND WRID CONCERNING CASE MANAGEMENT," by first-class mail, postage prepaid, to the persons on the attached mailing list.



Kathryn Landreth, Esq.
Asst. U. S. Attorney
100 W. Liberty St., Suite 600
Reno, NV 89509

Daniel N. Frink
State Water Res. Control Bd.
P. O. Box 100
Sacramento, CA 94814

Ross E. deLipkau
Marshall, Hill, Casses & deLipkau
P. O. Box 2790
Reno, NV 89505

Richard R. Greenfield, Esq.
Field Solicitor's Office
Department of the Interior
Two N. Central Ave., Suite 500
Phoenix, AZ 85004

Scott McElroy
Alice Walker
Greene, Meyer & McElroy
1007 Pearl Street, No. 220
Boulder, CO 80302

Linda A. Bowman, Esq.
Debra B. Robinson, Esq.
Bowman & Robinson
540 Hammill Lane
Reno, NV 89511

George N. Benesch, Esq.
1025 Ridgeview Drive, Suite 400
Post Office Box 3498
Reno, Nevada 89505-3498

James Spoo, Esq.
Treva J. Hearne, Esq.
Zeh, Polah, Spoo & Hearne
575 Forest, Suite 200
Reno, Nevada 89509

James J. Clear
U.S. DOJ/ENRD, Indian Res. Sec.
P.O. Box 44378
L'Enfant Plaza Station
Washington, D.C. 20026-4378

Larry C. Reynolds, Esq.
Deputy Attorney General
State Engineer's Office
123 West Nye Lane
Carson City, NV 89710

John Kramer
Department of Water Resources
1416 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 94814

Gary Stone
U.S. Dist. Water Court Master
290 South Arlington Ave., 3rd Floor
Reno, NV 89501

Robert L. Hunter, Superintendent
Western Nevada Agency
Bureau of Indian Affairs
1677 Hot Springs Road
Carson City, CA 89706

John Davis, Esq.
Post Office Box 1646
Tonopah, NV 89049

Mary Hackenbracht, Esq.
Department of Justice
State of California
1515 Clay Street, 20th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612-1413

David E. Moser, Esq.
McCutchen, Doyle, Brown & Enerson
3 Embarcadero Center
San Francisco, CA 94111

Robert Anderson & Timothy Lukas
Hale, Lane, Peek, Dennison, Howard
Anderson & Pearl
Post Office Box 3237
Reno, NV 89505

Bill Lockyer, Attorney General
Michael Neville, Deputy Attny. General
DOJ, Off. of the Attorney General
455 Golden Gate Avenue, Suite 1100
San Francisco, CA 94102-3664

Leo Havener
Walker River Irrigation District
P. O. Box 820
Yerington, NV 89447

Kelly R. Chase
Post Office Box 2800
Minden, NV 89423

Gordon H. DePaoli, Esq.
Dale E. Ferguson, Esq.
Woodburn and Wedge
6100 Neil Road, Suite 500
Reno, NV 89511

R. Michael Turnipseed, P.E.
Division of Water Resources
State of Nevada
123 West Nye Lane
Carson City, NV 89710

Roger Bezayiff
Chief Dep. Water Commissioner
U. S. Bd. Water Commissioners
Post Office Box 853
Yerington, NV 89447

Marta Adams, Esq.
Deputy Attorney General
State of Nevada
100 N. Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701-4717

William Hvidsten
Stuart Somach
DeCuir & Somach, P.C.
400 Capitol Mall, Suite 1900
Sacramento, California 95814-4407

Hank Meshorer, Special Lit. Counsel
US DOJ/ENRD, Special Lit. Unit
P.O. Box 7397
Ben Franklin Station
Washington, D.C. 20044-7397